

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

California viewed as bellwether for country

SAN FRANCISCO (BP and local reports) —

The rapid loss of biblical values in California poses a substantial danger to the rest of the nation, warns the president of Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca., a short drive across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco.

Healthy churches are part of the solution, Jeff Iorg told Baptist Press following a California Supreme Court decision to deny a petition to enforce Proposition 8, the voter-approved constitutional amendment to define marriage as between one man and one woman.

The issuing of same sex marriage licenses is among several controversial social changes in California, from passing a transgender restroom bill to banning

The challenges in California to biblical values are the vanguard of what is coming to the rest of the nation. Ground we lose here will soon be lost everywhere.

Jeff Iorg,
president of Golden Gate Seminary

see CALIFORNIA
on p. 10

Fictitious Facebook appeals increase

NASHVILLE (BP) — Rick Warren is among the latest Christian leaders targeted by phony Facebook pages using his name to bilk money from supporters.

Criminals have established more than 200 fake Facebook pages soliciting funds supposedly in memory of Warren's son Matthew, who committed suicide in April, Warren tweeted followers. The pastor of mega Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., told followers he had shutdown 179 of the pages as of Aug. 6.

Adding to the confusion is the fact that Saddleback is indeed seeking donations for the church's Matthew Warren Fund for Mental Health under the umbrella of the New Horizons Foundation of Colorado Springs, Co.

Christians can avoid such scams by investigating such solicitations before making contributions, said LifeWay Research President Ed Stetzer, whom criminals have twice targeted on Facebook, most recently this year.

"The biggest issue is that these scams don't work if you

see FACEBOOK on p. 10

Financial council accredits Int. Mission board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The International Mission Board (IMB) has received accreditation from the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA), demonstrated compliance with established standards for financial accountability, fundraising, and board governance.

Since 1979, ECFA has provided donors and potential donors with the assurance that their member organizations adhere to the highest standards of financial integrity and Christian ethics. In addition, ECFA keeps its members informed of accounting,

financial, fundraising, and legislative matters of common concern and promotes such on Capitol Hill.

Members include more than 1,700 Christian ministries, denominations, churches, educational institutions, and other tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations such as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Cru (formerly campus Crusade for Christ), and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

"IMB has always been conscious of its financial responsibility to Southern Baptists who sacrifice in order to help take the saving message of Je-

sus Christ to those who haven't heard," IMB President Tom Elliff said. "We are pleased to add ECFA accreditation as continued assurance to our constituents that we consistently conform to the highest standards of accountability."

David Steverson, IMB's treasurer and vice president for finance, said, "We have always respected the great work that ECFA and its members do to help advance the work of the Gospel across the U.S. and around the world."

"We've always endeavored to demonstrate the highest standards of financial

ethics, and now we are pleased to be a part of this growing family that shares a common commitment to Kingdom advance."

IMB passed all of ECFA's evaluation criteria, including financial accountability, transparency, sound board governance, and ethical fundraising, according to ECFA's president, Dan Busby.

"As IMB recognizes that over 6,000 people groups still live with little or no access to the Gospel, donors to its ministries may give with confidence of the highest financial integrity," Busby said.

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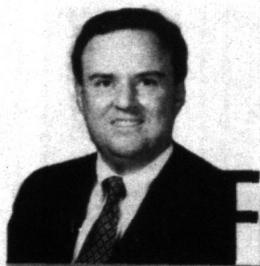
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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

It's school time, prayer time

Kids are sad; parents are elated. Lines are long, traffic is at a fever pitch, and patience is low, but that's all right. It's back-to-school week across most of Mississippi.

Tenderfoot parents are experiencing this phenomenon for the first time with both excitement and anxiety, while parents on the other end of the time line approach their final back-to-school week with — you guessed it — excitement and anxiety. We should say a prayer for all of them.

We should also pray for teachers and school administrators everywhere. So committed are they to their life mission that they are willing to forsake better salaries, waive better working conditions, and endure extreme pressure from all directions just to educate our children. There are very few higher and more precious callings.

Many of those teachers and school administrators are Mississippi Baptists. Many of them pray for their peers and for the students with whom they are entrusted, ever mindful of the legal and career ramifications for doing so in public. Many of them conducted prayer meetings and prayer walks in and around their schools over the past few weeks in preparation for the new school year, again mindful of the consequences of doing so.

They need all the spiritual support they can get. In California, children as young as kindergarten are legally required to declare what they believe their gender to be — male or female, the child gets to decide whether they are a boy or a girl regardless of anatomical facts. Refusal to follow the state's mandate by a school board or a principal or teacher can trigger a full-blown investigation by that state's attorney general.

In several hot spots around the country, battles rage between the true believers of evolution and proponents of intelligent design. Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons will be stripped of any spiritual meaning and renamed "harvest festivals" and "winter celebrations." (Halloween, how-

ever, will still be allowed under its traditional name.)

Mentioning God is verboten, a violation of church and state separation under the bizarre arguments of liberal extremist groups like the ACLU. Judeo-Christian subjects are off-limits, while fringe "religions" are highlighted and celebrated. Christian student groups must get a federal court order to hold meetings at the school, while homosexual student groups are welcomed with open arms. Religious-themed clothing is not permissible, but the display of tongue piercings and offensive symbols is protected.

Lastly, for all the reasons above and for many, many more reasons, we should pray for the students. In the coming weeks and months of this new school year, even the most sheltered children will be bombarded with ideas and temptations that could not have been imagined just a generation ago — public and private schools alike.

It's difficult enough to stem the constant flow of cultural sewage into our homes, but it's near impossible to control at school.

Our prayers for Christian students should be two-fold. First, we should pray that they will remain spiritually grounded and steadfast against the allure and bright lights in which the world wraps sin. We should pray that their discernment will be strong enough to avoid the snares and pitfalls they will encounter.

Secondly, we should pray without ceasing for their witness to non-believers. Although fringe elements in the Southern Baptist Convention are advocating abandonment of what they call "God-less" schools, our command from our Savior is to take the Gospel to the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Pray that they will remain faithful to this most important mission in the face of adversity, and pray that you will be a shining example to light their way.

It's a big, lost world out there, and our responsibility is to spread the message of Jesus Christ wherever we go. Let's get busy.

Time for parents to step in

A report on a youth camp for gender non-conforming boys — a retreat for prepubescent young men who behave in ways that are feminine — was posted in *Slate.com* this summer.

The camp provides a place for parents and children to feel "protected" as these young boys act out in ways that they wouldn't normally do in public. The article pictures boys wearing dresses, parading down runways, and putting on makeup — all of it with their smiling parents looking on in approval.

There was one particular line from the report that stood out as uniquely revealing: "Although it is unknown if the kids at the camp will eventually identify as gay or transgender — or even if the way gender and sexuality are defined throughout society will evolve — the camp allows the kids to look at themselves in a completely different way."

The utter moral confusion of that one sentence is astonishing. According to this author, it's not just these boys' gender that is unknown. It's also the very definition of gender and sexuality that is still up for grabs. It is an unwitting admission that the sexual revolutionaries and gender revisionists don't really know where they are trying to lead us.

This is exactly where the Christian vision of humanity has so much to offer people like the ones profiled in the article. The Bible puts solid ground beneath our feet. We don't have to guess at what it means to be male and female, so that parents don't have to sow even more confusion into their child's bewilderment.

The spirit of the age tells us that gender is nothing more than a social construct, a set of behavioral patterns and tendencies that we absorb from our culture and upbringing. In this way of thinking, gender norms are arbitrary and fluid. Thus to raise a little boy to be a little boy can be cruel and abusive if that little boy wishes to behave like a girl.

Gender is a choose-your-own-adventure story, and the parent's job is to get out of the way and let it happen.

The Christian vision is so very different from this and so very freeing and affirming of what we were really meant to be before God. In the biblical view, every single person is created in the image of God. God did not make us into undifferentiated, genderless automatons. On the contrary, he



Guest opinion
with Denny Burk

made us male and female (Gen. 1:26-27), and that fundamental biological distinction defines us.

Gender norms, therefore, have their roots in God's good creation and are revealed in nature and Scripture. The task of parenting requires us to understand those norms and to inculcate them into our children — even those children who have deep conflicts about their "gender identity."

The parental vocation is not an easy one. We are a fallen race. That means that we, as well as our children, are born with deep-seated antipathy toward what God made us to be. There is a brokenness in our bones that groans to be healed. As the Psalmist has it, we have all been brought forth in iniquity and conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5).

A parent's job, therefore, is not to get out of the way but to get in the way of every disposition or habit that threatens to derail what God made children to be (Prov. 22:6). Parents who refuse to correct the destructive tendencies in their own children aren't loving their children. They're failing their children (Deut. 6:6-7).

Therein is the singular tragedy of this story. Camps like the one profiled above teach parents to abandon children to their fallenness. They celebrate the very brokenness that Jesus died on the cross to forgive and to heal (1 Peter 2:24). They confuse and distort not only gender norms but also what the role of a parent is — to know the truth and to teach their children to walk in it (3 John 4).

As the sexual revolutionaries rally with cries of "liberation," they are steadily leading us and our children over a cliff. Are you going to follow?

Burk is associate professor of New Testament at Boyce College, the undergraduate arm of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

THE BaptistRecord

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Dwayne Parker, Flora Paul Sims, Pontotoc
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Postmaster:
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Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



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IMB prayer program graduates inaugural class

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Thirty years ago, Scotty Tipper's prayers never got any higher than the top of his head. At the time, he was a deacon at his church in south Georgia, taught Sunday School, and served as the church's discipleship training director.

There was just one problem: Tipper wasn't a Christian. "I knew I was lost, but I'd been in church my whole life," he said.

That truth ate away at Tipper's insides until he couldn't ignore the Holy Spirit any longer. During the invitation at church one Sunday morning, he stood up from the choir, walked down to his pastor in tears, and told him that he needed Jesus.

It was a life-changing moment, Tipper said. Today the retired educator is experiencing the same kind of spiritual transformation again — this time in his prayer life.

Tipper, now 63, was among 15 students who graduated from the inaugural class of the School of Prayer for All Nations (SPAN) at the International Mission Board (IMB) missionary training facility near Richmond, Va.

The class represented a wide cross-section of Southern Baptist life, drawing laypeople like Tipper, pastors, and even former missionaries from states as far away as Indiana and Texas.

"Before I came here, I would say that I could pray with the best of 'em," Tipper said, "but now, I don't want to pray with the best of them, I want to pray the way that Jesus prayed. That's the transformation I'm talking about."

It made such an impact that Tipper phoned his pastor to tell him that he would personally pay the pastor's SPAN registration fee if he would attend. "He said, 'Is it that good?' and I said, 'It will change your life.' ...Now the only reason he can't come is because he don't want to," Tipper added with a grin.

For Ashley Allen, a 33-year-old women's missions and ministry director with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, coming to

SPAN was all about the numbers.

"Over the last several years, the Lord has really burdened my heart for all these big numbers — 258 million lost people in the U.S., six billion lost people in the world," Allen said, adding that there are an estimated 5.8 million lost people in her home state of North Carolina alone.

"We sometimes forget that each number is attached to a soul — people who are eternally separated from God, who, if they died today, would be going to hell."

Marty Sampson (not his real name) an associate pastor in Auburn, Ala., said he was drawn to SPAN out of deep, personal conviction that Southern Baptists have forgotten the importance of prayer.

He asked not to use his real name because he often travels to areas of the world that can be hostile to Christianity.

"Most people don't know how to pray for the fulfillment of the Great Commission because they don't even know how to pray for themselves," Sampson said. "I'm convinced the church lags behind in spreading the Gospel because we are depending on ourselves, our strategies, and our plans as opposed to the power of God in response to intercessory prayer."

"I've been on a personal journey in my spiritual life of learning to be dependent on Him, and the key to that is absolute surrender. Everything about my life, everything that I value, I'm going to put on the altar so that nothing takes precedence over God."

What is SPAN?

SPAN began in 2012 when IMB President Tom Elliff called on Southern Baptist churches to recognize prayer's indispensable role in the Great Commission and to redouble their efforts to bathe the denomination's international missions efforts in a "blast furnace" of prayer for the nations.

Elliff said a "school of prayer" was needed to help fan the flames, and in July that vision became reality as SPAN held its first training session.

The school is led by Gordon Fort, IMB senior vice president of prayer mobilization and training, who said its purpose is to teach students to walk closer with God, pray



'STORM HIS THRONE' — International Mission Board prayer leaders Gordon Fort (left) and Ed Cox teach students during the inaugural session of the School of Prayer for All Nations near Richmond, Va. (BP photo)



PRAYER TIME — Ashley Allen (right), women's missions and ministry director with the North Carolina Baptist Convention, intercedes for the lost during the International Mission Board's new ISchool of Prayer for All Nations. (BP photo)

more fervently for spiritual awakening, intercede for missionaries and the nations, and mobilize others to join in prayer.

The disciples didn't ask the Lord to teach them how to heal people, cast out demons or feed 5,000, Fort said. "The only thing they asked Him was to teach them how to pray. In this spiritual discipline of prayer, I believe there are things that can be taught."

Things like spiritual warfare, how to listen to God while praying, the role of fasting in prayer, how to pray Scripture, and how to pray for the nations are just some of the subjects SPAN students cover.

Studying the meaning of some of the Greek and Hebrew words for prayer made an impact on Tipper. "The thing that hit me the hardest was that one of the words for prayer means 'to cry out desperately, lament.' Why don't we pray that way all the time? To cry out for the missionaries? That God's presence would be on them as the Holy Spirit leads them, that they would have a fruitful ministry,

and that people would come into His Kingdom."

SPAN classes are designed to be intimate, no larger than 21 students. Sessions run monthly. Registration for the five-day experience is \$250 per person or \$450 per couple, which covers lodging, meals, and conference materials.

Students must complete homework before attending, including enlisting at least five prayer intercessors who will commit to pray for them before, during, and after their time at the school.

Immersive experience

SPAN isn't focused on lectures and notes. Students spend as much time living out what they've learned as they do in class. Large blocks of time are carved out of each day's schedule for prayer. While some is done alone, students are also assigned to small groups of three called "prayer triplets." These groups are given daily prayer assignments, often praying over something that was just taught in class.

On one evening, students were asked to pray through

the night, signing up for 20-minute shifts to provide real-time prayer support for missionaries working in other time zones around the world.

"Everything has been interactive," Allen said. "It hasn't been like, 'From eight to five we're going to fill you with a whole bunch of information, you're going to take a whole bunch of notes, and then good luck with that when you go back home.' It's been, 'We're going to teach you how to do this and then you're going to go do it,' and that's the best way to learn because each one of us can walk out of here at the end of this week saying, 'I can teach people in my church how to do this.'"

Allen was also quick to point out that SPAN isn't the "R" word. "It's not a retreat," she said. "This is serious Kingdom business that we've been engaged in. A lot of people might say, 'C'mon, they're just praying!' but we've been constantly on our faces before the Father interceding for the lost and for missionaries around the world."

Housing the school at IMB's International Learning Center also comes with the added benefit of proximity to dozens of missionaries. The chance to regularly connect and pray with them during the week left a deep impression on Tipper, who says missionaries are his heroes.

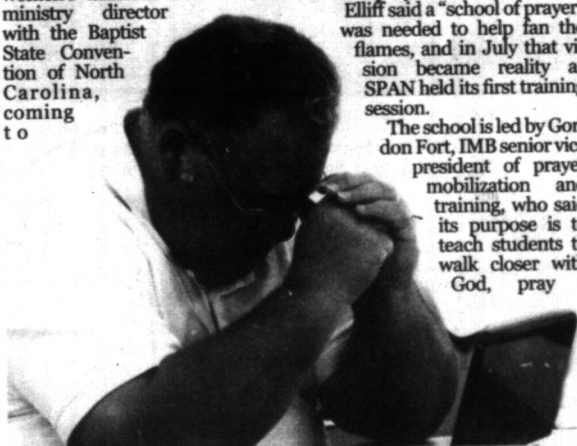
"I met a family that's got three children, all probably under five years old, and they're going to the Horn of Africa," he said. "They can't tell me where they are going, but they're giving it all up, all of the American dream — a house, car, money in the bank — all of that we say we have to have, they've given it up in obedience to Jesus saying, 'Here am I Lord, send me.'"

Concert of prayer

On their final night together, SPAN students gathered for a unique two hours of worship and focused prayer finale that Fort called the "concert of prayer." As thunderstorms rumbled outside, the SPAN classroom resonated with the murmur of soft voices lifted to heaven. Some were moved to tears. Others displayed creases of deep concern and concentration on their faces as they asked God to soften hearts to the Gospel.

It was an intimate moment with the Father and with each other.

"Maybe ...we can be carriers of that fire He's implanted in us and take it back to set our churches on fire," Sampson said, "and maybe our churches will set other churches on fire, and maybe the whole denomination will catch on fire... and maybe that revival in our nation that many people have longed for would come and the shockwaves would be felt to the uttermost parts of the earth. That's my hope."



GOING DEEPER — Scotty Tipper, a retired educator from south Georgia, was one of 15 students from churches across the Southern Baptist Convention who took part in the International Mission Board's first School of Prayer for All Nations, an intense evaluation of an individual's prayer life. (BP photo)

In the summer of 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States made several significant decisions interpreting our Constitution and our laws, and one of those was related to marriage. In their ruling they took a swipe at setting aside traditional marriage or in the minds of most people biblically based marriage relationships. And on the other hand, following their pronouncement they opened the door to establishing same sex marriage and the conversation concerning marriage heated up all across the nation. Some were elated and others were crushed in their spirit wondering what kind of world are we going to live in and in what kind of world will our children and grandchildren grow up.

Those who are proponents of same sex marriage have done a masterful job in posturing themselves as the enlightened ones and the abused and mistreated ones. Those who stand on biblical truth and the structure of the home as created by God and for centuries honored by society have been pushed into a corner of either being ignorant or radical, wild-eyed, uninformed religious zealots. While that certainly is not true, a lie can be perpetuated to the point that it looks real. Marriage was created by God and not by the Supreme Court. Marriage as structured through-out scripture cannot be restructured by any court.

Apart from the truth of the Word of God, a society becomes more and more confused, conflicted and convoluted in its thinking. It not only leads us on a path away from the plan and the purpose of God for a man and a woman sharing life, providing for the next generation and providing security and love for each other, but it opens the door



In Search of Biblical Marriage

to the next, the next and then the next step to warped thinking and twisted relationships. The thought process that has worked its way along to bring us to a decision by the high court related to same sex marriage can in days to come open the door to the possibility of additional partners being a part of the marriage or other species. For who are you to say that I cannot love my cat or dog? Who are you to take away the benefits that would rightfully come to them? For those of you who may think that position is absurd, it simply means that 20 years ago you were probably thinking it would be absurd to believe that the Supreme Court would ever pass what they did this summer.

For the Christian, one of the huge questions that comes before us is what do we do? How do we relate to and react to people who are in homosexual relationships and want to get married or attend our churches? Generally, our first im-

pulse is to ignore them or exclude them. You can do that, but I would ask you to evaluate that position in relationship to everyone else and in light of every other sin. Do you treat people who come to your church with that approach if they are in an immoral heterosexual relationship? Do you allow people to come to your church who have drinking problems or addictions? What if you have a business person in your church that you know treats other people unethically and if given a chance will cheat folks on contracts or try to pull underhanded deals?

You see the problem is that while some people may have a sin with which we vehemently disagree, there are a lot of folks who have sins that we may have become accustomed to overlooking. Since the scripture says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory God" (Rom. 3:23), we are confronted with the reality that every one of us probably has something in our lives that we could be ignored, excused or ostrac-

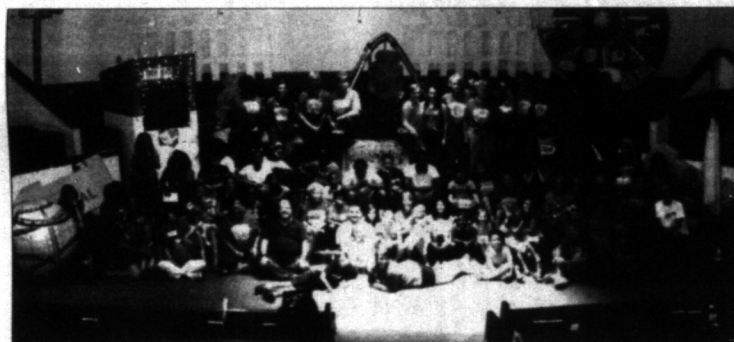
cized for if we chose to put it on the big screen of life.

An additional thing that we ultimately need to consider is to ask this question. How can anyone be helped, redeemed, reclaimed and used of God apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Can He make a difference in everybody and anybody's life? Absolutely! So paramount to anything that we think about or do, there needs to be the realization that everybody deserves to hear the Gospel of Jesus. Let's say that we will take our stand against all of these people however few or many there may be. We will take steps to make sure that they do not come anywhere on the premises of our churches. We will put up every barrier possible to prevent them from ever having an experience with Jesus. What happens if they have children either by adoption or by some other manner of conception? What are we doing to a whole generation of children that may come along who themselves are born into innocence and need a Savior?

Maybe all of us should pray with confidence and humility that the Lord will use us to share the love of Jesus with whoever we may have an opportunity whether this is a Muslim couple, a family plagued by alcoholism, the businessman whose devious ways have led to a collapse of his small kingdom or a gay couple seeking love and acceptance outside the plan and perimeters of God. The power of the Gospel is beyond description. Jesus can make a difference in anyone's heart. He did mine and He did in many of yours.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Vacation Bible School



GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON: June 23 - 27; 104 enrolled; average attendance, 95; eight professions of faith; three rededications.



FIRST CHURCH, LEXINGTON: July 8 - 10; average attendance, 41 children, 28 workers; mission offering to Baptist Children's Village; Carey Johnson, director; Jana Head, music director; Billy R. Williams, interim pastor.



EGYPT CHURCH, HAMILTON: July 15 - 19.



UNION CHURCH, CORINTH: July 8 - 12; 90 enrolled; average attendance, 78; 19 professions of faith.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Loop Road Church, Richton:** Revival, Sept. 1 - 7; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Joe Holder, Terry Partin, Greg Hodge, Stephen Wyles, Greg Belsar, Jackie Spell, and Dean Register, speakers; Rory M. Dill, pastor.

► **First Church, Plantersville:** 125th celebration, Sept. 1; worship, 10 a.m., followed by a church-wide luncheon and afternoon singing; David Hall, speaker.

► **Pilgrims Rest Church, Panola Association:** 128th anniversary and homecoming, Sept. 1; services, 10:30 a.m. with congregational singing, followed by potluck dinner and singing. Lee Graham, pastor.

► **Jericho Church, Guntown:** Super Sunday Nights in September revival, Sept. 1 - 23, 6 p.m.; Chad Higgins, David Haynes, Frank Wilder, and Jerry Bishop, speakers; fellowship nightly; Marvin Robbins, pastor; Brandon Alldread, minister of music.

► **Longino Church, Philadelphia:** Revival, Sept. 1 - 4; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, speaker; Steve and Becky Carver, music; Matt White, pastor.

► **Vardaman Church, Kemper County:** Homecoming, Sept. 1; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Dennis Knight, speaker; Dennis Robinson, pastor.

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ARLINGTON HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH OF PASCAGOULA, MISSISSIPPI IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Send resumes to Arlington Heights Baptist Church, Attention: Search Committee 3619 Arlington St., Pascagoula, MS 39581 or email to Arlington_church@bellsouth.net

FULL-TIME PASTOR, TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH, LAUREL AREA. Send resumes to 35 Trinity Rd., Laurel, MS 39443. Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOYLE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. An application can be obtained by contacting the church office from 8:00 A.M. - 12 Noon, Monday through Friday, at 662-843-4405. Please submit a resume with your application. Closing date for receiving applications is October 1, 2013.

DUCK HILL BAPTIST CHURCH IN DUCK HILL, MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT PASTOR/MINISTER OF MUSIC. Please e-mail resumes to dhbc_secretary@yahoo.com

BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER, WILDWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IN CLINTON, MS. Please mail resume to Wildwood Baptist Church, 101 Auburn Dr., Clinton, MS 39056 or email to wwbc@comcast.net.

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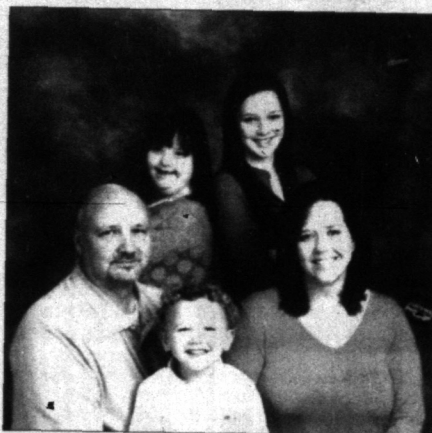
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Staff Changes



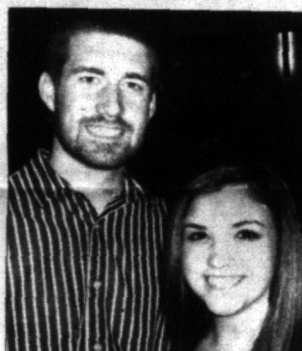
Tammy and Nathan Wells have retired as minister to students at **NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH, SUMMIT**, after 17 years of ministry service. Shown are Tammy, Nathan, and children Jonathan, Taylor, and Brooke.



GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON, has called Andy Fullington, Terry, as pastor. He comes from Shiloh Church, Sontag, where he served as bivocational pastor. He comes with his wife Donna and two children, Jenna and Wyatt.

In other Staff Change News:

► **New Prospect Church, Olive Branch**, has called Laura Lee as bivocational Preschool/Children's Director.



WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC, has called Micah Gilmore as Children/Activities Director. Shown with Micah is his wife Rachel.



STRONGHOPE CHURCH, WESSON, has called Robby Britt as youth pastor and minister of music. He is shown with his wife Tammy and children Josh and McKenzie.



Mimi Allen has retired as senior adult director at **NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH, SUMMIT**, after 21 years of ministry service.



TILLATOBA CHURCH, TILLATOBA, has called Drew Tillman as youth minister.

College News

In College News:

► **William Carey University** will hold the annual Endowed Scholarship Dinner featuring keynote speaker Sen. Roger Wicker at Southern Oaks House and Gardens on August 27. The evening will consist of a VIP reception and a dinner with musical entertainment by Miss Mississippi Chelsea Rick, who completed her first year of medical school at WCU, and an address by Sen. Wicker. A special scholarship will be established in honor of Sen. Wicker. For more information about donating to the Wicker Endowed Scholarship, contact Lynne Houston at (601) 318.6231 or lhouston@wmcarey.edu.

Just for the Record



FIRST CHURCH, SHANNON, held a baby dedication. From left: Lillian Reece Mask with parents Jeremy and Kass; John Henry Kelly with parents John and Margaret; and Andruw Choat with parents Daniel and Elizabeth. John Box, pastor.

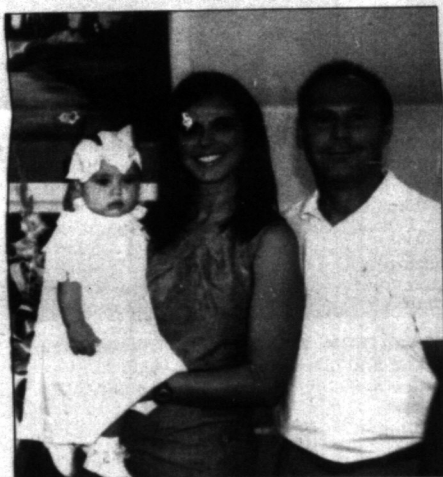


Youth from **NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON**, attended Centrifuge at Union University, Jackson, Tenn. Two students received Christ.

ROUNDAWAY CHURCH, DODDSVILLE, Men's Bake-Off was held July 28. The winners from left to right; Bobby Kirk, Best, Forrest Chandler, Prettiest, Aubrey Bruckner, Most Original, Allen Rush, Best Scratch Cake, Bro. Bob Hill, Best Mix Cake, and Ernie Lowery, Least Likely To Receive The Betty Crocker Award.



Five youth from **MT. OLIVET CHURCH, FOREST**, attended Centrifuge at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. Shown are Craig Harrell, Toby Harrell, Bailey Robinson, Johna Sims, and Emilee Polk. Chaperones included Bruce and Paula Robinson. Bruce Robinson, pastor.



GOOD HOPE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, held a parent/baby dedication service July 31. Shown are Don and Christy Barrett with daughter Lily Carsyn.



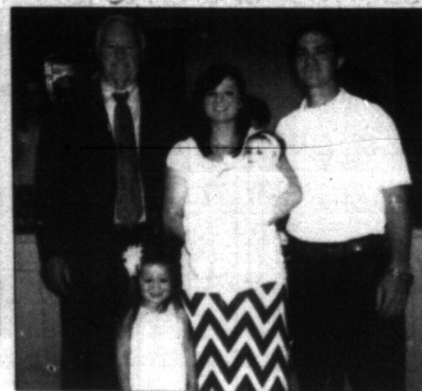
LOOP ROAD CHURCH, RICHTON, licensed Matthew Cowart to the gospel ministry Aug. 1. He is shown with pastor Rory M. Dill.



Youth and friends at **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, enjoyed the recent Back2School NERD party. Students performed a fashion show for the crowds with prizes awarded.



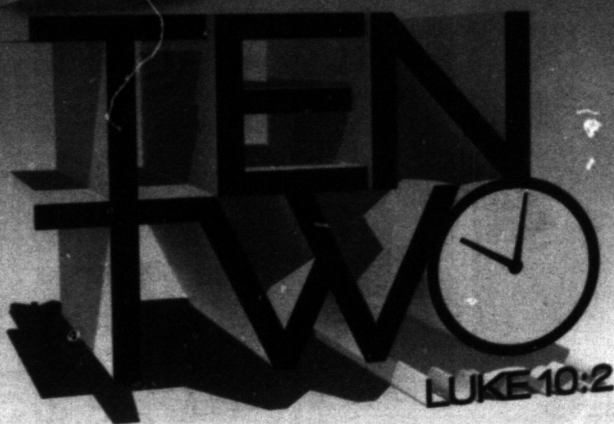
Twenty-five senior adults from **NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH, SUMMIT**, enjoyed an outing to Porches in Wesson.



ROUNDAWAY CHURCH, DODDSVILLE, held a baby dedication July 14 for Anslee Rivers Free. Shown are pastor Bob Hill, Ashlee Free holding Anslee, Patrick Free and Allie Free.

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

NAMB



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Testimony COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



featuring
Deanie Ferrell

CP transforms lives

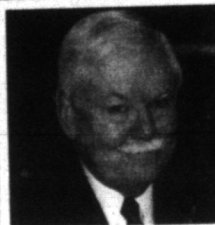
The Cooperative Program helped transform my life even before I knew it existed.

When I was 12 years old, my younger sisters and I were placed at the Baptist Children's Village in Jackson. We were removed from a situation of abuse and neglect. At the Village, we found the security, example and love that had been missing all of our lives. The consistency of the care we were given there by houseparents, counselors, music instructors and Dr. Paul Nunnery — by everyone, actually — was something we desperately needed. They made sure we got an education, clothes and food. At the Village, I developed friendships that are still special to me today; but more importantly, I was given an opportunity to know Jesus. It was at the Village that I began to understand what it means to be a Christian, and I even began challenging others in their own walk with the Lord. I learned to love music, attended Mississippi College and completed a degree in music. The Village nurtured me so that I became a Christian, received superb higher education, and committed

my life to full-time Christian service. Years later, the Cooperative Program was still impacting my life when my husband and I served as missionaries in the mountains of South America. For thirteen years, we ministered among the people of Ecuador, sharing the good news of salvation with many who had never heard of Christ. It was only because of the faithfulness of Southern Baptists to pray and to give that we were able to serve; confident in their supportive partnership in the gospel. During the entire time on the mission field, we were dependent on the Cooperative Program to keep us secure and comfortable. Without having to be concerned about our welfare and finances, we were able to minister with complete and total freedom.

Mississippi Baptist churches giving through the Cooperative Program have helped make all of this possible. Thanks Cooperative Program, for making a huge difference in my life!

To view this Cooperative Program Testimony online, please visit <http://www.mbc.org/cp/videos.aspx>



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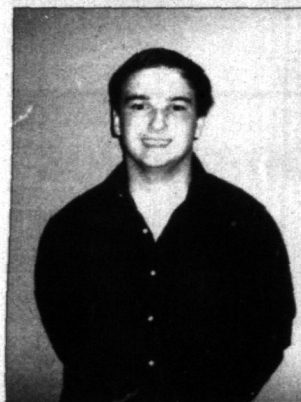
Just for the Record



BREWER CHURCH, SHANNON, hosted Wint and Vicky Fox and family, missionaries home on furlough. The Foxes reported on their ministry. Vicky's father, Tommy Vinson, once pastored Brewer Church. Shown are pastor Tim Tutor and the Foxes.



POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, MENDENHALL, recognized the accomplishment of GAs Anna Grace Bowlin, Mary Kate Toombs, Bethany Fewell, Bailey Eubanks, Annica Joy Griffin, and Natalie Jones Aug. 18. Lindsay Griffin and Casey Lewis, leaders; Ted Bowlin, pastor.



Two individuals from **WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC,** surrendered to vocational ministry. Shown are Lane Williamson (left); and Chuck Patrick with his wife, Maggie (right).



FIRST CHURCH, CALHOUN CITY, recently hosted the Calhoun County Baptist Pastors Association. Shown are pastors and retired pastors with their wives; Mike Smith, left, is pastor of First Church.



NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON, held a baby dedication May 26. Shown are Patrick and Samantha Craig with twins Logan and Jacob; Cory and Jamie Rawson with Cole; and Jake and Lacey Harrell with Hadley.

In other Church News:

► The women of **Carrollton Church, Carrollton,** are sponsoring a Women's Conference Sept. 14, led by Jennifer Walker. Cost, \$15, which includes a light breakfast and lunch. 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. For more information or to make reservations, call Rebecca Lancaster at (662) 237-6326 or 392-0218. Reservations made by Sept. 9 will be included in the meal count.

► **Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian,** is hosting The Revelations in concert Sept. 1, 5 p.m., with a finger food fellowship following. Love offering.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

HKJ GFBKC UHJF MFAOFZE, QF GFZHUJF

EQF HDEQPA PO FEFAXHW

RHWLHEBPK DKEP HWW EQFU EQHE

PGFN QBU;

QFGAFSR OBLF: KBKF

Clue: O = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 8:40

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Baptist archaeologists on the brink of major discoveries in Israel

JERUSALEM (BP) — Irish archaeologist R.A.S. Macalister faced a crucial decision in late 1907 when he reached the bottom of the ancient Gezer Water System in Israel — drain and excavate the pool at the bottom step, or explore the cavern beyond the pool. He chose to bypass the pool and excavate the cavern.

Macalister had no way of knowing the implications his decision would have on establishing a date for the system. Now, more than a hundred years after Macalister's dig, a re-examination of the water system by a team of archaeologists from the Moskau Institute of Archaeology at New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) and the Israel Nature

and Parks Authority (INPA) is bringing the implications of Macalister's choice into clear focus. Leaders of the NOBTS/INPA dig believe Macalister's choice preserved valuable data that will help establish a date for the tunnel's construction. This summer, the team began excavating the pool area in a search for datable material and the water's source.

The Old Testament mentions Gezer 14 times. One of the more important biblical entries reports that an unnamed Egyptian pharaoh conquered Canaanite Gezer and gave it to Solomon as a dowry (1 Kings 9:16). The account records that Solomon rebuilt and fortified Gezer along with the cities of Hazor and Megiddo.

Archaeologists have identified a common city gate type which certainly could be attributed to Solomon at all three sites.

Steven Ortiz, professor of archaeology and biblical backgrounds and director of the Charles D. Tandy Institute for Archaeology at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, renewed the excavations at Gezer in 2005 to study the area near the Solomonic gate with a consortium of schools that included both NOBTS and Southwestern Seminary.

The NOBTS/INPA water system re-examination, led by NOBTS professors Dan Warner, Dennis Cole, and Jim Parker along with INPA chief archaeologist Tsvika Tsuk, flowed out of the main Gezer dig, currently sponsored by Southwestern Seminary.

Pool and cavern

In Macalister's early 1908 quarterly excavation report, he presented a detailed explanation of the water system and explained his decision to move on to the cavern, calling the excavation of the pool "a difficult, expensive and (from the archaeological point of view) profitless task."

To facilitate the crossing of the pool area, Macalister laid a "causeway" of stones, effectively sealing the ancient content below. Late in the 2012 dig season, the NOBTS/INPA team discovered a layer of white chalky stones which had blended together and covered most of the pool surface.

Archaeologists are certain the layer is Macalister's causeway. "For us this was a gold mine," said Warner, associate professor of Old Testament and archaeology at NOBTS. "When Macalister laid the causeway over the water pool, he preserved for us everything underneath from further contamination and other intrusions from his excavation."

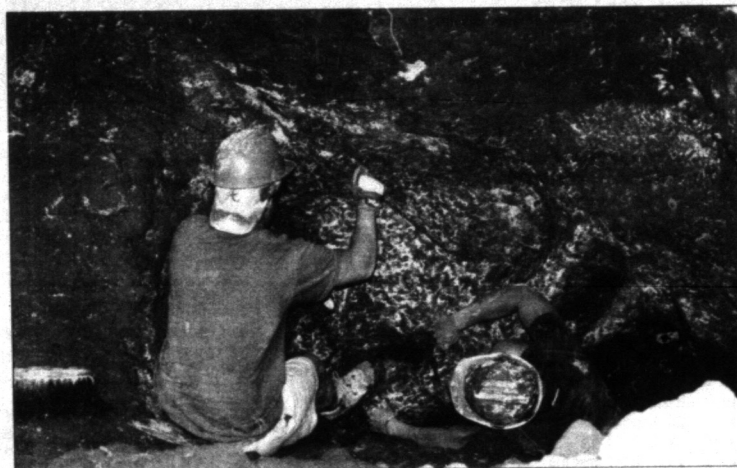
When NOBTS and INPA began re-excavating the water system in 2010, establishing a date for the system's construction was the foremost goal. Several dates for construction have been proposed over the years.

Macalister believed that the water system is a product of the Middle Bronze IIB period during the height of Gezer's influence as a Canaanite city-state. Others attribute construction of the system to Late Bronze Age Canaanites. Another prevalent view attributes construction to the Israelites during the time of Ahab. The difference between the earliest and latest dates for construction is around 800-900 years.

The dating of the system offers insights into the peoples of the Bible and their understanding of engineering and hydro-



CATALOGUING — Amy Brogan of New Orleans Seminary sorts and marks pottery found in the pool area of the Gezer Water System. (BP photo courtesy of New Orleans Seminary)



MEN AT WORK — John Canada (left) and Brian Mooney clean the floor of the pool in the Gezer Water System on a dig with members of the New Orleans Seminary's Moskau Institute of Archaeology and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority. Just to the left of Canada is a portion of "Macalister's Causeway," a series of stones laid over the pool area in late 1907. (BP photo courtesy of New Orleans Seminary)

logy. Proving one of the earlier dates, for instance, could lead to a better understanding of the development of the engineering skills the Canaanites possessed and contribute to a better understanding of the geopolitical situation.

2013 Expedition

The team went into the three-week dig season in May and June determined to find the bottom step of the water shaft and systematically excavate the area under the causeway. Most of the first two weeks of the dig were spent searching for the bottom step and cleaning Macalister's causeway. Tons of debris and rocks were removed in the process.

When the bottom step was located and the causeway area clear, the team excavated three probes in the pool area. Each of the pool probes reached a depth of more than six feet before the end of the digging season, and the bottom of the pool was discovered in only the Eastern probe located just below the bottom step of the water shaft.

The material encountered below the causeway was bagged and pulled from the water system by a crane. Once on the surface, volunteers sifted the wet, silty mud using wire mesh screens and water. The probes yielded large amounts of broken pottery shards, charcoal samples, and other

ancient material.

The dig's directors are confident that pottery from the water pool will yield an approximate date for the construction of the water system. After a preliminary reading of the pottery in the field, the shards and others items were transported to pottery experts for further analysis. A separate lab will examine and establish the age of the charcoal samples.

Completing the research in the Gezer water system will require a fifth dig season in the tunnel. NOBTS and INPA will return to the site in May and June of 2014 to complete the systematic excavation of the water pool.

Once the water pool is completely cleared, excavators expect to have a better understanding of the source of the water and a solid dating of the system. All of the material removed from the pool will be wet-sifted, and the items discovered in this process will be analyzed in the lab.

After the 2014 dig season and subsequent analysis, the NOBTS/INPA team will publish its findings.

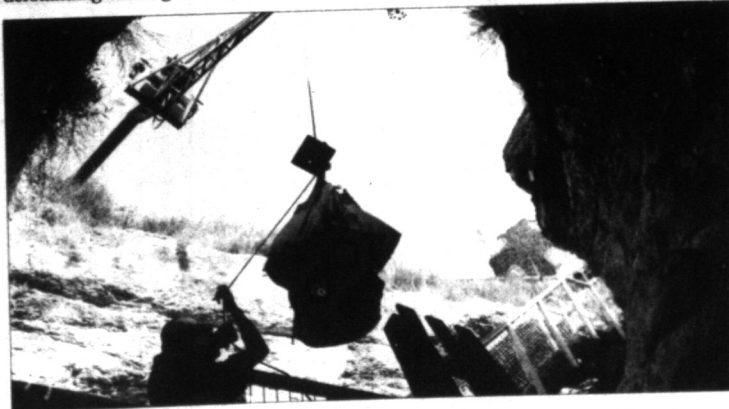
Unfinished Work

Macalister's discovery of the water system was an important step in understanding the ancient city of Gezer and its inhabitants. He produced detailed descriptions, drawings, and measurements of the system that offered the NOBTS/INPA team valuable data for planning their dig.

Macalister's excavation work in the cavern was ultimately a disappointment, though, according to archaeologists. The cavern probes yielded little ancient material and shortly after Macalister completed his cavern probes, torrential rains sent all the rocks, dirt, and debris his team had removed back down into the water system, archaeologists said.

With the system backfilled, Macalister moved on to excavate other areas at Gezer and the water system was left untouched for more than 100 years. By the time the NOBTS/INPA team began excavating the water system in 2010, more than two thirds of the rock-hewn shaft was filled with debris.

Dating the material Macalister left below the causeway, and ultimately establishing a date for construction, is expected to help complete the unfinished work in the water system.



HEADS UP! — Former New Orleans Seminary trustee Bill Bailey guides a bag of debris as it is pulled from the ancient water system at Gezer, Israel, part of the ancient Canaanite city-state society. (BP photo courtesy of New Orleans Seminary)

CALIFORNIA

cont. from p. 1

conversion therapy for those with same-sex attractions.

"The challenges in California to biblical values are the vanguard of what is coming to the rest of the nation. Ground we lose here will soon be lost everywhere," said Iorg, who delivered the Bible Treasures series of devotionals at the 2012 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention in Jackson.

Every step away from biblical values weakens the nation, Iorg said. "In California, we are already overwhelmed with the results of these choices: rising alcohol and drug abuse, overcrowded prison system, social service organizations scrambling to help distressed persons, etc."

Amid the downward spiral, "the most hopeful signs are the rising tide of church planting and growing concern for pastors to revitalize existing churches through biblical preaching and teaching," Iorg said.

The California Supreme Court, in a unanimous ruling Aug. 14, did not address the constitutionality of Proposition 8 and left supporters of traditional marriage few legal options in defending the initiative approved by seven million California voters in 2008.

Austin Nimocks of Alliance Defending Freedom, the legal group that filed the petition along with ProtectMarriage.com, said elected officials should enforce the law. "Though the current California officials are unwilling to enforce the state constitution, we remain hopeful that one day Californians will elect

officials who will," he said in a written statement.

Nimocks maintains that Proposition 8 is still the law of the land in California despite public officials who refuse to enforce it and have proceeded with issuing marriage licenses to same sex couples. The court's decision, he said, "does not end the debate about marriage in California."

Andy Pugno of ProtectMarriage.com said the decision "leaves grave doubts about the future of the initiative process" in California. "Now voters will be less confident than ever that their votes will mean something. When politicians disregard the law, and the courts refuse to get involved, what are we left with?"

Ron Prentice of the California Family Council said, "Homosexual marriage is now being allowed in California precisely because California's governor and attorney general were unwilling to defend the will of the people and our state's constitution. The Supreme Courts of California and the United States have also neglected their duties to protect the authority of law and the people's right to direct democracy through the initiative process."

"This decision marks an extreme period of lawlessness that can only be countered by a response from voters, to take from office those whose ideological agendas deny the existence of moral absolutes, and who aggressively seek to destroy the liberties of conscience and religious faith."

Proposition 8 supporters point out that when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that ProtectMarriage.com did not have legal standing to appeal a U.S. district judge's

opinion striking down the amendment, the nation's high court did not rule on Proposition 8's constitutionality.

The district court order did not apply statewide, ADF said, meaning that no qualified body has yet ruled Proposition 8 unconstitutional. California's governor, attorney general, and other officials, therefore, lacked proper authority when they instructed counties to begin issuing marriage licenses in conflict with Proposition 8.

"Article III, section 3.5 of the California Constitution prohibits government agencies and officials from declaring state law unenforceable, or declining to enforce state law, on the basis that the law is unconstitutional, unless an appellate court has first made that determination," ADF said.

Among other recent and controversial social changes in California, Democrat Gov. Jerry Brown signed a law Aug. 12 giving transgender K-12 students the right "to participate in sex-segregated programs, activities and facilities" based on their perception of their gender regardless of biology.

Last year Brown signed a bill banning efforts by therapists to help teenagers overcome same-sex attractions. The law was put on hold by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals pending a resolution on its constitutionality.

Earlier this year, a bill was introduced in the California Senate that would penalize youth organizations, including the Boy Scouts, that discriminate on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. Such organizations could lose their tax-exempt status.

FACEBOOK

cont. from p. 1

don't give money," Stetzer told Baptist Press. "If someone asks you for money via a Facebook message, be skeptical. Check it out. In my case, I would never send someone a Facebook message asking for money, so if you get such a message, you need to ask, 'Is this normal?'" he said.

Warren established the fund for mental health sufferers in April after his son's suicide. Criminals followed suit with scams, although no complaints have surfaced indicating individuals gave money through the fake appeals.

Phony Facebook pages look almost identical to official pages, but can often be discerned as phony, said Marty Duren, LifeWay's manager of social media strategy.

"First and foremost, they ask for money," Duren said. "Second, there is usually a far fewer number of 'likes' on the page than you might expect for a celebrity or well-known leader. Third, the main pictures (cover and profile) are usually stolen from the actual page."

Their existence indicates some level of success, Duren said. "I would guess, like the 'Nigerian Prince' email scams,

there is some success at bilking people out of money. If there [were] none, people would stop doing it. However, I do not know of specific data."

Every Facebook page has a "settings" menu that accepts reports of suspicious pages, and Facebook will remove such pages after several complaints.

"Generally, everything one intends to put on the Internet should be treated as if it will be there forever," Duren said. "However, pages and links that are removed will generally rotate out of search engine reach over time."

Like Stetzer, Duren advises against giving money through Facebook. "Don't give," Duren said. "You cannot stop a fake page from popping up or trying to convince you [to make] a financial gift. Almost no credible leaders will make financial appeals through Facebook pages. The best rule of thumb is, 'Don't give through Facebook.'"

Stetzer fought fake appeals in his name by tweeting followers about the problem. "Each time, I tweeted and posted on Facebook, asking people to report the fake page. It takes a little while for Facebook to act, sometimes a day or two, so I worry that some people were scammed in the meanwhile."

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG for-

mat. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed.

Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

God Revealed • John 1:1-5, 9-14, 16-18

It seems that every now and then someone sees Jesus in the most unexpected places. Well, not Jesus Himself, but rather an image of Him. As if on cue every few months, some dear soul makes a shocking discovery and "sees" Jesus in the shape of a cloud, in a pancake, or better yet, on the surface of the planet Mars. While most of us find these humorous, (do not forget the fact we have no idea what Jesus looks like) we can, in fact, be thankful. He has been revealed to each of us in a more awesome and genuine way than any of the tabloid news stories. As a demonstration of His great love and plan for redemption, the Heavenly Father sent His Son into a sinful earth. This is not only a great and wonderful truth; it is the essence of the gospel.

In this quarter's lessons we will venture together through the first eleven chapters of the book of John. By doing so, we will have the joy of recalling some of the most familiar accounts from the life of Christ. If you are a Sunday School or small group leader, you may be faced with the temptation to assume you already know all there is to know about the material in these Bible studies. Please do not fall into this trap. Each time we look at the life of Christ with an open heart and a teachable spirit, God will present or remind everyone of us a truth possibly forgot-

ten, a reason to contemplate His love for us, or finally, a loving correction we need to apply. Let's begin.

Roots and Revelation (1:1-5)

The first 18 verses of John's Gospel serve as a prologue for the reader. John puts down some deep theological roots at the beginning of this writing. These "roots" serve as the foundation of practically everything he intends to share with the reader. Don't just casually skim these verses. It may seem that these five verses are running together in your mind, but take the time to prayerfully read and meditate upon them. This powerful passage sets the tone for much of the New Testament. It is no wonder why William Barclay wrote, "John is the book on which above all we can feed our minds, nourish our hearts and find rest for our souls."

There is little doubt in the first verses that John is speaking of Jesus. John

uses the term "Word" for two principal reasons. One, it is found in the vocabulary of the Old Testament and was a familiar expression of the Jewish people. Secondly, it was a word commonly utilized in Greek philosophy. Why would John do this? He was attempting to bridge the gap between the religious Jews and the unbelieving Greeks. He wanted to share with the whole world,

not just a select few, about Jesus and how he came to forgive them of their sins and redeem them. God

has revealed His Son for everyone! It is important to note that while we have yet to even scratch the surface of this book, we have before us God's plan of reconciling the lost to Himself. In summation: Jesus is the Eternal God and to know Him is to walk in the Light.

Receive and Realization (1:9-18)

John continues his theme of "Jesus is

the Light," in this passage. The NASB records verse 9 in this way: "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." This is not implying that all people will be saved. John is writing to tell the reader that since Christ has now made His appearance on the earth, every person is accountable to God. Through general revelation (creation, nature, etc.) and conscience, each person has enough "Light" around them each day to be responsible for either receiving or rejecting God. Of course, that does not mean everyone will receive God. Verses 10 and 11 make it clear there are many who refuse to receive Jesus, and by doing so, reject forgiveness and everlasting life.

Verses 16-18 are a great concluding point for this week's study. It demonstrates the awesome realization of grace. I am thankful in verse 16 that John uses the term "grace upon grace." He does so to make clear the abundance of and scope of God's incredible act of bestowing upon us what no one deserves. I don't know about you, but I will take grace over Jesus in a pancake any day!

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

The Pressure of Trials • James 1:1-4

One of my favorite maxims is "a trial rightly borne becomes a blessing." The Book of James explores for us those pressure points which have gotten our attention. He gives us guidelines to save us from our sometimes poorly made decisions. His writings pertain to Jewish churches and he admits that most Christians find the pursuit of holiness difficult at times. Our sins and those of others often become a hindrance and our understanding of God's will for us becomes distorted. James relies heavily on and honors the sermons of Christ, and plainly talks about principles applying to our every day trials. Would you admit with me that this is a valuable book to refer to over and over?

In the first verse he humbly calls himself a slave of God. We all must adopt that attitude in order to live a Christian life. A slave has no inherent rights. Certainly these Jews whom God had scattered all around the Mediterranean world had now become believers, and could associate their lives with this idea. James later became pastor of the mother church of Jerusalem and yet considered himself always a servant.

In V. 2 he urges his readers to consider it entirely a happy situation when you fall into trials. Say what? He explains that these trials test our faith and that should be a source of joy because (V. 3-4) this testing brings us into enduring. When we allow this endurance (stay the course and stay

focused) to work out its full effect, it makes us complete and entire and lacking nothing. We become complete only after working through the trial and realizing we have developed integrity in our thinking, in our attitude, in our actions toward the problem, towards others in the family, church, or workplace, etc. Trials occur in all our lives and their purpose is to bring about this completion of who and what God is expecting of us.

We cannot ignore this old idiom of "its not what happens to you but its all about how you handle it." Can you walk away from an angering situation without a nasty verbal outpouring? Give yourself a cooling off window called endurance, and that endurance can bring actual personal joy. It is here that you can appreciate a trial and call it a gift from God because it strengthens and completes your faith. Attitude with which you endure wrong-doing has much to do with how well you endure.

James says in V. 4 we must allow for the full effect, meaning stick with your decision to the end. We've all changed our minds before we got to

the finish line and denied ourselves the prize, the full effect. We had the gift box in hand but failed to open it. Bummer. God is still there waiting for our dependence on Him. His goodness can still mold you into a well finished product as you begin to see the benefits of His plan.

Don't fall into that cesspool of stinking thinking, "oh, this is too hard, I deserve better than this, why me?" We are to consider, count, regard, think hard about it, and deliberately and intentionally

allow the endurance to become part of our Christian experience. Endure until you begin to realize the

intended results and joy takes over. Christians don't lose value because of their troubles and trials, but begin to discern that the aggravating incident is fading from their memories. Even their facial muscles are beginning to relax and now they are free to smile again and think about other things. Remember that God supplies us with what we need, maybe not what we think we need.

If you've endured, you are now ready to effectively represent Christ to others. You have seen the value of tri-

als and tests and how important they are to your Christian maturation. You are now qualified to become a model to others and offer encouragement to those who are beginning to endure hurts, grief, pain and setbacks. There is always someone you know who is in desperate need of help. Explain to them based on what James says that there are joys awaiting them. Didn't Job say "Happy is the man whom God correcteth"?

When we endure illness, a family death, a financial struggle, or estrangement of a child, we learn guidelines to equip us to go through the next round (and there will be a next one). Patience is never to be ignored while you are enduring a trial. It can work perfection that you may not see until it is finished. When you are beginning to rejoice a little in your endurance of trouble, then you will look back on your patience and become thankful. Seek from God the correct way to deal with your trial — what can I do to help others see God's wisdom. James indicates God wants us to lack nothing.

God is not the author of our trials, errors of judgment, dead wrong decisions, but He sure knows how to pull us through. Prayer is highly recommended in the Scripture and we're told if any lack wisdom let him ask for it. Choose the joyous ending for your trials.

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

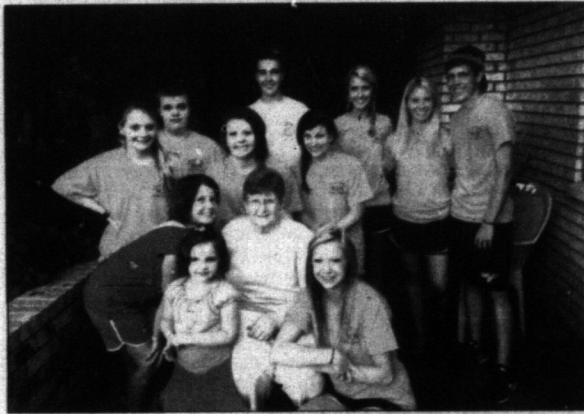


Explore the Bible
with Bobby McKay



Bible Studies for Life
with Evelyn Gibson

Just for the Record



The S.O.S. Youth Group from **PLEASANT HOME CHURCH, JONES ASSOCIATION**, performed several community service projects this summer during their "Students Out Serving" activities. Darren Dickens, student minister.



Pre-teens from **POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, MENDENHALL**, recently attended Pre-Teen Explosion Camp at Milldale Conference Center, Zachary, La.



CALVARY CHURCH, MERIDIAN, presented the W. Otis Seal Scholarship to Clark Jenkins, left, and Sam Jennings. Shown with the students is A. Otis Seal, son of former pastor W. Otis Seal.



LEMOYNE BLVD. CHURCH, BILOXI, licensed and ordained Tyler Selby, right, to the gospel ministry Aug. 11. He is shown with pastor Bill Renick.



Nine students and three chaperones from **CENTRAL CHURCH, MERIDIAN**, attended the Summer Music and Arts Camp for Kids held at William Carey University in July.



BUNKER HILL CHURCH, COLUMBIA, held a baby dedication July 28. Shown, from left, are Chase and Leigh McDaniel and baby Landry; Ben and Kathi Selman with baby Matilyn; Alan and Lori Niven with baby Andrew; and Michael and Elizabeth Edwards with baby Holden.



LEFLORE CHURCH, HOLCOMB, held its baby dedication. From left: The Veasey family, Daves family, and Malone family. Larry Livingston, pastor.



PEOPLES CHURCH, RIPLEY, licensed Nathaniel Brown to the gospel ministry Aug. 18. He plans to attend Blue Mountain College. He is shown with pastor Jeff Adams.



GOOD HOPE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, held a parent/baby dedication service July 21. Shown are Tyler Germany, Erika Clark, and their daughter Karsyn Leigh.



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, sent four students and leaders to Super Summer at Mississippi College. Shown are Marcus Moak, Phillip Wallace, Pam Wallace, and Kara Beth Crosby.